

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 04844 291231Z

53

ACTION PM-03

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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 4844

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, XO

SUBJECT: DIEGO GARCIA

REF: STATE 123690

SUMMARY: PUBLIC GOP POSITION ON DIEGO IS THAT IT IS IN NO POSITION TO TELL THE SUPERPOWERS HOW TO CONDUCT THEMSELVES. IT DOES NOT OBJECT TO OUR PROJECTED BUILDUP. THE GOP'S PRIVATE VIEW IS MORE FAVORABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. MOST COMPLETE EXPOSITION OF GOP PUBLIC POSITION ON DIEGO GARCIA IS STILL STATEMENT MADE BY MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AZIZ AHMED TO PAK PARLIAMENT ON APRIL 1, 1974.

2. IN THIS STATEMENT, AZIZ DECLARED THAT WHAT HE TERMED THE REPORTED ESTABLISHMENT OF A US NAVAL BASE ON THE ISLAND WAS A MATTER BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 04844 291231Z

HE OBSERVED THAT IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MAKES

PARTICULAR FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO THE USG, THERE IS NOTHING PAKISTAN CAN DO ABOUT IT. PAKISTAN, HE SAID, WAS AN IMPORTANT COUNTRY BUT A SMALL ONE, AND IT WAS NOT UP TO HER TO TELL THE SUPERPOWERS HOW TO CONDUCT THEMSELVES.

3. AZIZ WENT ON TO POINT OUT THAT IF ONE SUPERPOWER BROUGHT LARGE CONTINGENTS OF NAVAL POWER INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN, WHICH HE NOTED HAD BEEN DONE IN THE PRECEDING YEAR, IT WAS "INEVITABLE" THAT ANOTHER SUPERPOWER WOULD DO THE SAME. THE SUPERPOWERS WERE CAPABLE OF SENDING PATROL VESSELS INTO AN OCEAN INDEPENDENT OF NAVAL BASES, THUS THE FEAR THAT THE PARTICULAR DEVELOPMENT AT DIEGO GARCIA ALONE WOULD LEAD TO A NAVAL BUILDUP (AS AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER HAD ARGUED) WAS NOT JUSTIFIED.

4. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO REITERATED THIS BASIC GOP POSITION IN A TELEVISEFGPRESS CONFERENCE WITH FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS ON JANUARY 31. THE PM STATED AT THAT TIME THAT PAKISTAN WAS OPPOSED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FOREIGN MILITARY BASES ON ITS OWN TERRITORY BUT WAS IN NO POSITION TO TELL THE MAJOR POWERS WHAT BASES OR NAVAL FORCE LEVELS THEY SHOULD MAINTAIN IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA.

5. MFA OFFICIALS HAVE TAKEN A SLIGHTLY STRONGER LINE IN FORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH U.S. EMBASSY OFFICERS AND OTHER DIPLOMATS. A RECENT EXAMPLE WAS FOREIGN SECRETARY AGHA SHAHI'S COMMENTS TO THE AMBASSADOR ON HIS DIALOGUE IN MID-MAY WITH GOI OFFICIALS IN NEW DELHI. SHAHI NOTED THAT HE HAD TOLD THE INDIANS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE THAT THEN AKS SEE NO PRACTICALITY IN THE IDEA UNLESS ALL CONCERNED (INCLUDING THE SUPERPOWERS) AGREED ON LIMITATIONS OF NAVAL STRENGTH IN THE AREA. IN THE MEANTIME, HE HAD ARGED, PAKISTAN DID NOT SEE ITSELF IN A POSITION TO ATTEMPT TO TELL ONLY ONE SUPERPOWER, THE U.S., "NO" (TO DIEGO) WHILE THE SOVIETS AVERAGED ABOUT FOUR TIMES AMERICAN REGIONAL NAVAL POWER (ISLAMABAD 4651). SHAHI SUBSEQUENTLY GAVE THE SAME BRIEFING TO OTHER DIPLOMATS HERE. WE WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE THRUST OF HIS REMARKS BEING ALLUDED TO IN OPEN TESTIMONY, BUT WOULD PREFER THAT HE NOT BE SPECIFICALLY CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 04844 291231Z

CITED AS THE SOURCE.

6. THE GOP'S PRIVATE VIEW OF THE DIEGO GARCIA ISSUE AND THE BROADER ISSUE OF NAVAL POWER IN THE INDIAN OCEAN IS MORE FAVORABLE TO THE CONCEPT OF A U.S. PRESENCE IN THE AREA THAN THE "WE ARE IN NO POSITION TO OBJECT" APPROACH IT TAKES PUBLICLY AND IN FORMAL BRIEFINGS.
IN MARCH 1974, SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL TOLD AMBASSADOR

IN RESPONSE TO OUR DEMARCHE THAT WHILE IT WAS NOT THEIR PRESENT INTENTION TO SUPPORT OUR MOVE PUBLICLY, WE COULD KNOW PRIVATELY THAT THEY UNDER-STOOD OUR MOTIVES COMPLETELY. ADDITIONALLY, THE GOP HAS PRIVATELY CALLED OUR ATTENTION TO ITS APPREHENSIONS THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF MAJOR NAVAL FORCES FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN UNDER A ZONE OF PEACE CONCEPT WOULD RESULT IN INDIAN NAVAL PRDOMINANCE IN THE AREA. THE PAKS SEE THIS AS A FURTHER STEP IN INDIAN MOVES TO ESTABLISH REGIONAL HEGEMONY, A PROSPECT WHICH THE GOP VIEWS WITH DEP CONCERN AND MAKES CONSTANT EFFORTS TO HEAD OFF. PAK UNWILLINGNESS, IN THIS CONTEXT, TO BE MORE FORTHRIGHT IN ITS PUBLIC APPROACH TO DIEGO STEMS LARGELY FROM CONCERN ON ITS PART THAT THIS COULD DAMAGE ITS EFFORTS TO BURNISH ITS THIRD WORLD CREDENTIALS, ANOTHER MAJOR GOP FOREIGN POLICY GOAL. THIS PRIVATE GOP VIEW SHOULD NOT, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, BE ALLUDED TO IN OPEN TESTIMONY.

7. DEPARTMENT PLEASE REPEAT TO OTHER CONCERNED POSTS AS DESIRED.

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